

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 03483 130756Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-02 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-20 OES-07 SP-02
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 OPIC-06 /155 W
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R 121651Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO USDOC WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1100
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS TUNIS 3483

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BTIO, ENRG TS
SUBJ: MAJOR PROJECTS IN TUNISIA: STATUS OF NEW STIR OIL
REFINERY, UPGRADING OF OLD

REF: TUNIS 0678, 77 TUNIS A-097

1. TRADE SOURCES REPORT MANAGEMENT OF STIR, TUNISIAN OIL
REFINING COMPANY, SAYS GOVERNMENT DECISION SHOULD BE MADE
BY MID-JUNE TO PROCEED WITH PROJECT FOR NEW REFINERY AT
BIZERTE WITH THREE MILLION TON ANNUAL CAPACITY (APPROXIMATE
COST \$150 TO \$200 MILLION). AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, NEW
REFINERY WOULD BE DESIGNED (PRESUMABLY USING CATALYTIC
OR HYDRO-CRACKING) WITH VIEW TO MIXIMIZING PRODUCTION
OF LIGHT PRODUCTS BECAUSE TUNISIAN MARKET FOR
HEAVY PRODUCTS TO BE LIMITED BY DOMINANT INDUSTRIAL USE
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 03483 130756Z

OF NATURAL GAS (FROM MISKAR PROJECT AND ALGERIA-TO-ITALY
PIPELINE) EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE FROM 1981.

2. NEW REFINERY, AS PART OF STIR'S OVERALL EXPANSION,
WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO PROGRAM BEING STUDIED BY FOSTER
WHEELER TO REMOVE BOTTLENECKS IN PRESENT REFINERY
(WHICH ALREADY IS PRODUCING ABOVE ITS MILLION TON

RATED ANNUAL CAPACITY) AND THUS RAISE ITS CAPACITY TO ABOUT 1.5 MILLION TONS.

3. BOTH EXPANSION AND NEW REFINERY ARE SPECIFIED IN FIFTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN (77 TUNIS A-097). WITH TUNISIA'S REQUIREMENTS FOR PETROLEUM PRODUCTS OUTPACING ITS PRESENT REFINING CAPACITY (IMPORTS OF 720,000 TONS WILL BE NEEDED THIS YEAR TO SUPPLEMENT STIR'S PRODUCTION OF 1.1 MILLION TONS), UPGRADING THE EXISTING PLANT IS CLEARLY OF HIGH PRIORITY. GIVEN PAST HISTORY OF NEW REFINERY PROJECTS FOR TUNISIA, WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL OF TIMETABLE OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH (1). NEVERTHELESS, PROJECT IS ALIVE AND JUSTIFIES ATTENTION BY INTERESTED AMERICAN FIRMS.
MULCAHY

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